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E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KWMN](#) [KHUM](#) [KU](#) [WOMEN](#) [POLITICAL](#) [RIGHTS](#)
SUBJECT: NOMINATION OF MA'ASOUMA AL-MUBARAK FOR
INTERNATIONAL WOMEN OF COURAGE AWARD

REF: A. STATE 12871

1B. KUWAIT 86

11. (U) Post nominates Dr. Ma'asouma Al-Mubarak, Minister of Communications, for the International Woman of Courage Award.

12. (U) Dr. Ma'asouma became the first woman in Kuwait's history to be appointed to the cabinet when she was named Minister of Planning and Minister of State for Administrative and Development Affairs in June 2005. In a July 2006 cabinet reshuffle she became Minister of Communications. During the first parliamentary session she attended as a minister (all ministers are ex officio members of parliament), Dr. Ma'asouma calmly endured a chorus of loud protests from the chamber. It is a testament to her courage and competence that less than two years later her presence in the cabinet has become widely accepted. The skill with which she manages her current portfolio and with which she managed her original portfolio in the Ministry of Planning have served as clear evidence to Kuwaitis that a qualified woman can serve effectively as a minister. If Dr. Ma'asouma had used her ministerial posts as a bully pulpit to talk about women's issues, it might have given women's rights opponents an excuse to say that appointing a woman is a distraction. But while Dr. Ma'asouma does not shy away from addressing the issues still facing women in Kuwait, she devotes more attention to the issues relating to her ministerial position. The image of a competent minister handling her portfolio with dignity in the face of significant societal opposition will be a model for other Kuwaiti women to follow in years to come.

13. (U) Dr. Ma'asouma comes from a humble background. Her father was a tailor and a pearl diver (pearl diving was one of Kuwait's main industries before the discover of oil). Yet she went on to earn a Ph.D. in International Relations from the University of Denver in 1982. She has taught political science at the University of Denver, the University of Bahrain, and Kuwait University. She is a long-time advocate for women's rights, participating in numerous NGOs and writing frequently in many newspapers. Before women won the right to vote in 2005, Dr. Ma'asouma was one of a group of Kuwaiti women activists who had annually attempted to register their names on voting roles in protest of female disenfranchisement.

14. (U) Dr. Ma'asouma Al-Mubarak's contact information:

Name: Dr. Ma'asouma Al-Mubarak
Title: Minister
Institution: Ministry of Communications
DOB: unknown, born approximately 1949
Phone: 965 924-6222(mobile) or 965 665-4764(mobile), 965 552-3305 (home)
Email: drmalumubarak@yahoo.com

15. (U) Post point of contact for women's issues is
Political Officer Mark Rosenshiel (RosenshielMS@state.gov).

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